

## FAMILY HISTORY by James Berkeley Larsen

My parents were Andrew Larsen and Christena Mathiassen of Mt. Pleasant, Utah. Their parents were Jens Larsen and Maren Andersen, and Mathias Mathiassen and Dorthea Rasmussen. My parents' first home was an adobe three-room house for which my father and a hired man made the adobes. It was located in the west part of Mt. Pleasant, Utah. It faced east on the west-most street of the town. The day I was born, 27 Feb. 1889, father was digging a well on our place. When the digging reached a depth of some forty or fifty feet a large sand stone in the middle of the well almost blocked further progress.

Finally chains were secured around the rock and it was hauled up to the surface and the digging went on. A neighbor came over to visit and casually picked up a sledge hammer and began striking this rock when, on a sudden, the rock split in two and from a cavity in the stone a large toad rolled out. It was a bright sunshiny day and the toad finally roused up and hopped away.

Four of my parents' children were born in this adobe house. The were: Andrew Jr., born 17 Sept. 1885 and died the following December; Mary La Tressa, b. 6 Dec. 1886; myself, b. 27 Feb. 1889; Jacob Raphael, b. 6 Apr. 1892. When about 3-years-old I contracted pneumonia and almost died. The Lord saved my life through the prayer and administration of my uncle James Larsen.

My father engaged in the sheep business. He came home late one evening, hung his six shooter on the porch and the next morning it was gone; it had been stolen in the night.

While living here I enjoyed my first sleigh ride that I remember. It was a one-horse sleigh built, by my father, of planks. He took my sister Tress and me out to Jim Hunter's (about 2 ½ mi. from our home).

One day my cousin, Anthony Poulsen, who lived next door to us, and I attempted to take my little Express wagon over to his place. We lifted it over the fence and when it fell down on the other side it was broken up very badly. I cried pretty hard! My uncle Jacob, mother's brother, was sick in bed at our house at the time and said, "Don't cry. When I get well, I'll fix your wagon." But he died shortly after and I don't remember whether the wagon was ever repaired or not.

I recall being down in the corral when my father was taking care of some sheep. Some were sick and father would lift their heads up into the hay manger. My Uncle Jim Larsen came over and said, "Andres, you're just wasting your time. They will only die anyway."

When I returned home from my first day at school, my mothers asked me how I liked it and who my teacher was. I told her, "I don't like school and I don't know who my teacher is, but I don't like her either. She scares me; she has GREAT BIG EYES."

My father's step-father had a small farm just west of our place and when he passed in his wagon going to his field Anthony and I would sometimes get to ride with him.

My paternal grandmother lived just one block east of us and very often she would have all the relatives at her place. She had a large cookstove on the front of which she would fit a large grill in which were about 2 doz. little round depressions into which she poured a batter. When the batter was cooked on one side she would turn it over and when it cooked on the others side each cake came out a little round ball which she rolled in sugar and handed to one of the grandchildren who stood eagerly waiting to enjoy this Danish delicacy which was called Alverskever.

One winter when my father went on the desert with sheep he hired a young emigrant boy to stay with us at home to do the chores. He slept with me for a few nights and the next thing I knew, I was scratching my head until I was almost frantic. One day my Aunt Sophia Poulsen was at our home and she and mother discovered I had head lice. The emigrant boy was already in bed and mother was so mad she forced him to get up, dress and leave. He first denied being lousy, but he was, and he had to burn some of my clothing and boil all the rest and all of the bedding and it caused quite a furor. But we came out of it alright.

My maternal grandmother lived a block north and a block west of our adobe house in a home my father and her son, Chris Mathiassen, purchased for her. She taught me a little smattering of Danish, as she never learned to speak English. She was very apt at carding, spinning and knitting wool into wonderful warm stockings for us children and she always had candy or lump sugar or something good to give us when we visited her.

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